CONSTITUTION
GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION
RICE UNIVERSITY
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CONSTITUTION OF THE GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF RICE UNIVERSITY

Approved March 1996

Article One: Name

The name of the organization shall be the Graduate Student Association of Rice University, herein abbreviated as GSA or referred to as the association.

Article Two: Definition

The GSA shall be the incorporation of the general graduate student body at Rice University.

Article Three: Membership

All full-time, regularly enrolled graduate students of Rice University and only said students shall be members of the association. Members shall pay semester dues collected by the university at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters.

Article Four: Insignia, Mascot, and Motto

Section 1
The device or coat of arms representing the GSA shall be a green field charged with eight conjoined white lozenges, with a white chief bearing a red book, with seven gold seals and gold edging, between two black grackles. A banner depicting this device shall be used at formal events of the association and the university.

Section 2
The mascot of the association shall be the black grackle.

Section 3
The official colors of the association shall be green and white.
Section 4
The motto of the association shall be *bonis avibus*, literally "(under) good birds," referring to the association's mascot. The phrase signified favorable omens to ancient Romans and is a reflection of the association's perseverance and optimism in all seasons.

Article Five: Graduate Student Council

Section 1
All legislative power of the association shall be vested in the Graduate Student Council. The Council shall determine association policies, shall elect executive officers of the association, shall approve social and cultural events, shall authorize the association’s annual budget, shall hear graduate students’ concerns and complaints, shall establish rules and ordinances for the greater good of graduate students at the university, shall issue resolutions and reports encouraging the advancement of graduate studies and the betterment of graduate student life, and shall, directly or through the president or appointees, represent the association and its members to the university administration, trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, undergraduates, or other bodies.

Section 2
The Council shall consist of the executive officers, as defined in Article Six, and one elected representative from each academic program.

Section 3
Representatives to Council shall be elected to one-year terms by the regularly enrolled, full-time graduate students in their respective departments.

Section 4
Representatives shall each have one vote on all questions.

Section 5
The President shall vote only to break a tie vote of Council and the Parliamentarian may only vote to break a tie vote for elections. No other executive officer may vote in Council, even in proxy, or serve as a department representative.
Article Six: Executive Officers and Directors

Section 1

All executive power of the GSA shall be vested in the President and the Executive Committee, which shall be composed of the President, Vice President of Community Engagement, Vice President of Student Advocacy, Vice President of Administration, Vice President of Finance, and Vice President of Student Development. In addition to these elected executive officers, the association's faculty sponsor, staff advisor and the Parliamentarian shall serve as non-voting members of the Executive Committee. The elected executive officers and the Parliamentarian shall be members of the association.

Section 2

The President shall be advised by a Cabinet, which shall be composed of the other executive officers.

Section 3

The President of the GSA shall determine agenda for Council, Executive Committee, and Cabinet meetings; shall implement and oversee the execution of all programs, ordinances, and directives established by the Graduate Student Council; shall preside at all regular and called meetings of the Graduate Student Council, the Executive Committee, and the Cabinet; shall serve ex officio on all committees of the Council and the Cabinet; and shall represent the GSA on and off campus. Furthermore, the President shall call meetings of the Council at the request of at least three representatives and may also call meetings at his or her own discretion; shall, with the advice and consent of the Council, shall oversee the policies and procedures of the GSA loan fund program; shall serve as one of the graduate student representatives on the university's Graduate Council; shall submit annually to Council, with the Vice President of Finance, for consideration and approval, a budget proposal for the association; and shall, with the co-signature of the Vice President of Finance or other executive officer, disburse funds from the accounts of the GSA as approved by the Council. The President appoints all Directors with the approval of the Council.

Section 4
The Vice-President of Student Advocacy shall oversee the policies and procedures in the association's efforts to improve student life; coordinate and foster relations with the various organizations and offices of the university community; appoint standing and ad hoc committees for the association, designate chairs for the association's standing and ad hoc committees, appoint representatives to joint committees, and name other representatives to University administration, trustees, faculty, undergraduate, and other groups; shall present nominations to the President and Council for graduate representatives to the ombudsmen selection committees for University Court and Honor Council; and shall preside in the absence of the President. Furthermore, should the President resign the office, withdraw from the university, or cease to be a member of the association in good standing, the Vice President of Student Advocacy shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the office of President. The Vice President of Student Advocacy, along with the Vice President of Finance, also has oversight over all student clubs funded by an independent student tax. The Vice President of Student Advocacy will also oversee and assist the Community Service Director and the Graduate Student Space Director.

Section 5
The Vice President of Community Engagement shall oversee the planning and implementation of all Council-sponsored programs, services, and social events; shall, with the President, plan, implement, and direct public relations policies and events for the GSA and its Council; shall oversee and assist the Social Director(s), the International Student Outreach Director; shall serve as the association's non-voting representative to the V and W Board, or shall make nominations for a representative to that board, to the President and Council; shall direct the association's congress with Valhalla; shall coordinate and foster programs of communication and cooperation with the Office of International Students and Scholars, the Rice Women's Resource Center, various University cultural organizations, other universities, and governmental entities locally, regionally, and nationally; and shall report external events and information to the Council. The Vice President of Community Engagement shall also organize and lead monthly roundtable meetings with student leaders of on-campus cultural organizations. The Vice President of Community Engagement shall appoint the coordinators for Orientation Week and Beer Bike and oversee the planning and implementation of Orientation.

Section 6
The Vice President of Finance shall keep all funds of the association in an account approved by the Council and in accordance with university policy; shall disburse funds of the association, upon the authorization of the Council; shall make a current and accurate general report of the association's funds to the Council in its regular meetings; shall submit a complete and detailed report to the Council within the month before annual elections or whenever such a report may be requested by Council; shall provide a written account of the annual report to the Vice President of Administration; and shall submit annually, with the Cabinet, a proposed association budget to the Council for its consideration and approval. This position is also responsible for maintaining an up-to-date budget on the GSA Shared Drive accessible to the Cabinet. The Vice President of Administration, along with the Vice President of Student Advocacy, also has oversight over all student clubs funded by an independent student tax. This officer, shall oversee and assist the Grants Director.

Section 7
The Vice President of Administration shall keep an accurate and current role of Council representatives; shall keep and publish complete minutes of all meetings of the Council, the Executive Committee, and the Cabinet; shall deposit all minutes and other records in the association's archives at the end of term; shall preserve and maintain the association's archives; shall attend to the correspondence of the association and its Council; shall receive, approve, and submit to Council's consideration the petitions of dependent organizations; shall keep a record of all active dependent organizations and their officers. The Vice President of Administration shall oversee and assist the Media Director and Website Director.

Section 8
The Vice President of Student Development shall assist departmental and school Graduate Student Associations and hold monthly meetings with their leaders; serve as a liaison between departmental and school Graduate Student Associations and the Council; shall coordinate and foster programs of communication and cooperation with alumni; shall serve as the Executive Board liaison to the Council Representatives; and shall oversee and assist the Professional Development Director.

Section 9
Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Parliamentarian shall oversee revisions and additions to the constitution and by-laws of the association; shall maintain an up-to-date edition of the constitution and by-laws of the association;
shall advise the President and Council on procedural matters; shall oversee the association's elections and referenda; and shall submit end-of-term resolutions on behalf of the Council. Furthermore, the Parliamentarian presides over the Awards Committee selection process and is responsible for coordinating any and all GSA award ceremonies.

Section 10

Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Community Service Director shall organize, oversee, and execute on- and off-campus community service events to provide graduate students a means for giving back to campus-wide, local, and/or international sources. Community service events and information shall be reported to the Council.

Section 11

Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Graduate Student Space Director shall oversee the use, organization, and programming of the Captain Lounge (aka Graduate Student Lounge). The Graduate Student Space Director is responsible for the upkeep of the Captain Lounge in addition to the office space(s) of the GSA. The Graduate Student Space Director shall assist the Vice President of Student Advocacy in matters of enhancing graduate student space and services on campus. Lounge-related events and information shall be reported to the Council.

Section 12

Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Professional Development Director shall coordinate with the Center for Career Development and other relevant professional offices on campus; shall make existing professional programming more accessible and help develop new programming; shall establish and maintain relations with graduate student alumni through outreach; and shall assist the Student Association with mentoring opportunities and programming for graduate students.

Section 13

Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Social Director(s) shall assist the Vice President of Community Engagement in planning and implementation of GSA sponsored programs, services, and social events. This officer(s) shall also oversee Beer Bike.
Section 14
Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Media Director shall oversee the advertising and marketing efforts of GSA events: shall document all events on the GSA website and social media accounts.

Section 15
Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Website Director shall maintain and update the GSA website and GSA calendar as needed.

Section 16
Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the Grants Director shall assist the Vice President of Finance as needed with upkeep of the yearly budget; and shall oversee the Grants committee, Grants meetings, and Grants allocation.

Section 17
Appointed by the President and approved by the Council, the International Student Outreach Director shall serve as the primary liaison to the Office of International Students and Scholars; shall meet monthly with the Vice President of Community outreach and leaders of international student organizations; shall be the principal Cabinet member in charge of planning Graduate International Cultural Night and Graduate International Student Orientation.

Section 18
The Cabinet shall consist of the executive officers, directors, and the Parliamentarian.

Article Seven: Faculty Advisor

Section 1
The Faculty Advisor of the GSA shall be elected annually by the Council along with all executive elections and shall be a tenured member of the Rice faculty who has demonstrated a concern for graduate studies and graduate student life at the university.

Section 2
The Faculty Advisor shall serve as a non-voting member of the Graduate Student Council, the Executive Committee, and the Cabinet; and shall advise these bodies in their deliberations.

Article Eight: Meetings

Section 1
The Council shall meet publicly at least once a month throughout the calendar year and shall meet, either publicly or privately, at other times as deemed necessary by the President or by a call from at least three representatives.

Section 2
Members of the association shall be accorded time at regular meetings of the Council to speak on issues affecting graduate student life at Rice University.

Section 3
The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a month to discuss the activities and projects of the association and its Council, and shall meet at other times at the discretion of the President.

Section 4
The Cabinet shall meet at the discretion of the President.

Article Nine: By-Laws

Section 1
By-laws shall be established to facilitate the fair and efficient execution of all policies, ordinances, acts, and directives of the GSA and its Council, Executive Committee, and Cabinet; and to regulate the proceedings, elections, and programs of the association and its Council, Executive Committee, and Cabinet.

Section 2
By-laws and amendments to by-laws may be proposed by any member of the association in a written recommendation to the President or the Parliamentarian.

Section 3
The approval of two-thirds majority of Council members present and voting...
during consideration of the question shall be necessary before ratification of a by-law or an amendment to a by-law.

Section 4

New by-laws or by-law amendments shall become effective fourteen days, excluding holidays, after the publication of the Council's approval, unless contested by association members demanding a referendum. Contested by-laws and amendments that are approved in referendum shall become effective immediately after referendum results are published.

Article Ten: Amendments

Section 1

Any member of the association may propose an amendment to this Constitution by writing to the President or the Parliamentarian.

Section 2

Upon receipt of a proposed amendment, the Parliamentarian shall review it for clarity of language and shall present to Council the proposed amendment as received, and if edited, as changed. The Parliamentarian shall also present those sections of the Constitution affected by the proposal.

Section 3

Proposed amendments to the Constitution shall be voted upon in Council.

Section 4

The approval of two-thirds of the voting body shall be required for the ratification of an amendment.

Section 5

An amendment shall become effective fourteen days, excluding holidays, after its publication, unless contested by association members demanding a referendum.

Article Eleven: Initiatives, Referenda, and Recalls
Section 1
 Council may defer to the association’s general membership by calling for a referendum.

Section 2
 Any member of the association, writing to the Vice President of Administration with a statement signed by 20 of the current members of the association, may present, in the form of a seconded motion, an initiative regarding any matter, which shall then be considered by Council; or may propose a question for consideration in referendum, which shall then be put to the whole membership of the association.

Section 3
 A referendum shall be conducted by the Parliamentarian within thirty days, excluding holidays, after Council's receipt of a petition signed by 50% of the Cabinet. To be lawful and binding, a referendum must elicit votes from at least 80% of the department representatives.

Section 5
 Proposals made through initiative and voted on in referendum, other than amendments to the Constitution, shall be approved by a simple majority of those voting in the referendum. Amendments to the Constitution that are proposed through initiative or deferred by Council to the general membership shall require the approval of two-thirds of the members voting in a referendum.

Article Twelve: Ratification

The approval of a simple majority of departmental votes shall be necessary to present this Constitution to the association membership in a constitutional referendum. The approval of three-fifths of the full-time, regularly enrolled graduate students voting in the constitutional referendum shall be necessary for the ratification of this Constitution.

Article Thirteen: Nondiscrimination Policy

This organization shall not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color,
religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status.

**Article Fourteen: Anti-Hazing Policy**

This organization shall not engage in any form of hazing, as defined by the Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable Rice University rules and regulations.